

INCORPORATING ABORIGINAL
CONTENT AND PERSPECTIVES
IN SASKATCHEWAN CURRICULA:
EXPERIENCES OF SELECTED TEACHERS

A Thesis

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Education

in the Department of Curriculum Studies

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within current provincial curricula. This exploration was accomplished through administering a survey to selected teachers teaching in urban, rural and Band controlled school divisions and by conducting semi-structured interviews.

Three themes emerged in the data analysis: (a) the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives takes time; (b) the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is an important initiative.; and (c) teachers require further supports for the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. These three themes form the basis of five recommendations to school and provincial policy makers and teacher education programs.

This study is important because all teachers in the province of Saskatchewan have been required to implement Aboriginal content and perspectives into their curricula since 2000.

The population growth of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is continuing to rise. Because of this the provincial education system is experiencing an increase in Aboriginal students.

Hence, this study will inform the development of future policies to ensure that all children in Saskatchewan come to know Aboriginal content and Aboriginal perspectives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is impossible to undertake such a journey as this without the guidance of many individuals. I would like to thank the following individuals for their support, encouragement and guidance throughout this journey.

Thank you Dr. Alan Ryan for your guidance as I was developing the survey for this thesis.

Thank you Dr. Edwin Ralph for your expertise in the area of the APA writing style.

Thank you Richard Zwarich for your computer expertise.

Thank you to my committee members. To Dr. Janet McVittie, thank you for your support and encouragement throughout this entire process. To Dr. Angela Ward who helped me begin this thesis and has continued to support me through all of life's surprises along the way. I appreciate your understanding and support at those times in my life when it was difficult for me to focus on my study. To Dr. Florence Glanfield for the many hours you have dedicated to my study. I wish I could in some way repay you for your encouragement and guidance. I appreciate how you were instrumental in ensuring that I was focused on my study and how you always made sure I was able to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank you to the teachers who participated in my study, in particular the four teachers who allowed me to share their stories.

Thank you to my four children Lindsay, Lana, Shayna and Joshua. I appreciate how you have allowed me the time to work on my thesis. I know at times it was difficult when I could not be with you doing the things that we enjoy

so much as a family. Your patience and understanding carried me from the beginning of this thesis to its completion.

To my husband Felix whose love and wisdom has carried me through my work. Thank you for always being here for me.

DEDICATION

With generations love,
this is dedicated to the children of the
Sixth and Seventh

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introduction to the Study

Storytelling is an art that Aboriginal¹ peoples of the world share. The storyteller uses the power of stories as an educational tool that teaches those who listen to the story the lessons we need in order to live a rich and good life with all of our relations. Many storytellers are the old people who have wisdom from many years of experiencing life and the world of which we are a part. The old people often tell stories of the future. Stories of the fifth and seventh generation have been told since the early visionaries knew of the coming of the white man. Here is an example of a story, as found in a pamphlet published by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (1993).

Our people have many stories. These stories teach morals, standards, and values. Today, we are living in troubled times. Our old people have taught us that the only way to have individual and family harmony is to live these morals, standards and values. Many of our people have forgotten these truths. My grandmother told me this story.

‘Long ago, our people were very happy. They worked hard and always shared what they had. They were proud, proud to be an Indian. Our people have many visionary leaders that described our day as a time of trial and tribulation. Our people have always known that with the coming of the white man, there would be great change. This change would affect all those who forgot the teachings of the forefathers. For many, this forgetting would be tragic because they abandoned these truths’.

¹ In order to get a true sense of this thesis it is important to define two terms as I use them. For the purpose of this study the term Aboriginal is used to define all people who are Indian, Metis or Inuit. The term Indian refers to those people who are registered under the Indian Act of 1876 (Brizinski, 1989).

The period of trial would last at least four generations. In the fifth generation a reawakening would stir in the hearts of the people. Slowly at first, but gradually our people would recommit to living these truths.

The fifth generation refers to the Aboriginal people who are presently adults. It is believed that these people will begin a ripple effect that will grow in strength and be carried on to the seventh generation. The seventh generation will regain that which has been lost and enable the Aboriginal people to once again be the masters of their destiny.

I am an Aboriginal woman of the fifth generation. My children are the sixth generation and my yet unborn grandchildren will be the seventh generation. I feel a great responsibility to do all that I can to help establish a path for the children to aid in the greater task that faces them in the future. I believe I must do all that I can to assist Aboriginal people so that we may, one day, all recommit to the teachings of our forefathers and to living the truths that we have always known.

I am also a teacher. Upon completion of my Education Degree I had acquired a Native Studies Major. I have witnessed and been a part of Saskatchewan Learning's initiative to implement the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. It is my background and experience that led me to the research question.

In my culture it is also appropriate at the beginning of each gathering for an Elder to offer an opening prayer. The gathering in this thesis includes you the reader, each of the study participants and myself, the author. Hence I wish to share the following opening prayer with you. I invite you to imagine that we are seated together in a circle listening to this prayer with the aroma of sweet grass

floating through the air. I also invite you to remove your glasses and jewelry because in my culture we remove our glasses and all jewelry to ensure our individual spirits are fully able to hear and understand the words of the prayer. The prayer is intended to invite each of us to have open minds and hearts as we embark on this journey of reading the thesis.

HONORING WHAT THEY SAY. OPENING PRAYER

O Great Spirit

Whose voice I hear in the wind

Whose breath gives life to the world

Hear me

I come to you as one of your many children

I am small and weak

I need your strength and wisdom

May I walk in beauty

Make my eyes behold the red and purple sunset

Make my hands respect the things that you have made

And my ears sharp to hear your voice

Make me wise so that I may know the things

That you have taught your children

The lessons that you have hidden in every leaf and rock

Make me strong, not to be superior to others

But to be able to fight my greatest enemy, myself

Make me ever so ready to come to you with straight eyes

So that when life fades as the faded sunset

My spirit will come to you without shame

Author Unknown

Research Question

My research question explores the following question: What are the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within current provincial curricula?

Background to the Study

As an Aboriginal person of the fifth generation, my grandfather would often tell me “For us to understand where we are now and where we are meant to go in the future, we must know and understand where we have come from.” Hence in order to fully explore my research question I must go back and provide a historical perspective about Aboriginal education.

When the Europeans arrived they felt a need to civilize, Christianize, and colonize the Aboriginal peoples. Typically the two most direct routes to achieve this goal were religion and education. As far back as the 1600’s, the Jesuits combined religion and education and established seminaries for young Indians to facilitate the process of civilization (Persson, 1980). It was believed that there would be total assimilation and acculturation of the Aboriginal people by the Europeans. Many Europeans believed that if this process was not successful, the Aboriginal peoples would not survive and genocide would result.

Education has been one of the most direct routes to assimilate and acculturate Aboriginal people. The process of education in this country has not been one that provided equal opportunities for all students. The Aboriginal community has not only experienced a lack of success, but has also had to struggle to maintain many elements of their culture and identity which have been stripped away in the colonization and assimilation processes.

Unfortunately, the opportunity for success for Aboriginal students has been limited. The European model of education was foreign to Aboriginal people. The content, perspective, attitudes, standards, morals, values, and language of education were based on European standards and beliefs. Aboriginal

people were expected to adopt European educational values and abandon those that were familiar to them. This same education system, intended to enhance the lives of non-Aboriginal students, actually marginalized, trivialized, devalued, and dehumanized Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people were expected to abandon every aspect of their existence including their history, culture, tradition, values and standards, religious beliefs and language. This was expected of them by the dominant society, who viewed all aspects of Aboriginal existence as inferior and irrelevant. The education system established by the colonizers closely echoes this effort. The curriculum purposely set out to devalue Aboriginal cultures and to emphasize European culture. This left little opportunity for Aboriginal students to experience success within the European model of the education system. Because of the continued lack of educational success and the high dropout rate for Aboriginal students, the dominant society assumed Indian society had a problem requiring correction. On the other hand, Price (1978) suggests that a more humanistic perspective be incorporated to judge individual success and be based within the context of the individual's culture: "Dropping out of a high school which is irrelevant to one's life, perhaps alienating to one's home community, and destructive to one's home culture might be the healthiest thing an individual could do. The 'problem' of Indian education lies more with the existing character of that education than with Indian society" (p. 264).

Upon reflection one can see that the curricula of the past had been used to emphasize European experience and to devalue or negate Aboriginal experience. It is important that educators ensure Aboriginal content and perspectives are

incorporated into current curricula of our education system. Educators must not only emphasize the European experience, but must truly begin to incorporate the Aboriginal experience to ensure a high quality education for all students in our education system.

The purpose of education is considerably different between the European model and the Aboriginal model. One of the purposes of European education is to gain material wealth and status. This is not necessarily so for Aboriginal education. Alfred Manitopeyes is a respected Saulteaux Elder from the Muskowekwan Band, a reserve in southern Saskatchewan. He discusses what Aboriginal education is and what it means. He says education is to be rich in the spiritual sense, first. One's spiritual well-being is directly related to one's material well-being. This is not to imply that there is necessarily a causal relationship between spirituality and material wealth. It means that one cannot be measured by his/her material wealth. Elder Manitopeyes says that materialism without spirituality is not a healthy condition. Also it is not morally right, according to Elder Manitopeyes, to have material abundance and wealth in the face of another's poverty (Akan, 1992).

When examining what Aboriginal education originally meant to European curriculum, the damaging effect of the latter on many generations of Aboriginal people becomes apparent. Ermine (1995) explains that the arrival of Europeans brought about the first meeting of two very different world-views and approaches to education. "One was bound for an uncharted destination in outer space, the physical, and the other was on a delicate path into inner space, the metaphysical" (p. 101). Because of the role of colonization, the European model

of education was introduced and used as a tool to assimilate and acculturate Aboriginal people. Since that time, Aboriginal people have struggled with an education system that was irrelevant to them.

What does it mean for teachers to implement Aboriginal content and perspectives in their current curricula? Also what are some experiences that teachers might be having in the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within their current curricula?

Importance of the Study

Saskatchewan Learning² indicates that all teachers, if they are teaching in Saskatchewan schools, must implement Aboriginal content and perspectives in all curricula. This is particularly important in Saskatchewan when an examination of current and projected population demographics is analyzed. Table 1.1 illustrates the current and projected population demographics for the province of Saskatchewan (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 1997, p.60).

² Throughout this thesis you will see the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education referred to as Saskatchewan Learning and Saskatchewan Education. The reason for this is that, during my study, the name of the department changed from Saskatchewan Education to Saskatchewan Learning.

Table 1.1 Saskatchewan population projections (000's).

Year	1995	2005	2015	2025	2035	2045
Aboriginal	134	178	223	278	348	434
Non-Aboriginal	883	904	892	886	891	903
Total Population	1018	1082	1115	1164	1239	1337
Population Proportions (%)						
Aboriginal	13%	16%	20%	24%	28%	32%
Non-Aboriginal	87%	84%	80%	76%	72%	68%

Table 1.1 projects that the population growth for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is much greater than that of non-Aboriginal people. The increase in the Aboriginal population indicates that there will be a continued rise in the number of Aboriginal students in the education system. It is for this reason that all teachers in Saskatchewan need to be able to successfully incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives into the current curricula in order to provide relevant content and perspectives to all students.

It was recognized in the 1980's that changes to the current curriculum were necessary in order to address the rising population of Aboriginal students in the education system. At this point Saskatchewan curricula was reconsidered. In the late 1980's the Indian and Metis Education Advisory Committee proposed changes to the curriculum that would include Indian and Metis content and perspectives in all curricula. The Indian and Metis Advisory Committee "makes recommendations and advises Saskatchewan Education through the Indian and

Metis Education Branch on the development and implementation of programs of instruction impacting upon Indian and Metis education (Saskatchewan Education, 1991, p.1). In the early 1990's many curricula were changed or were in the pilot process of change to include Indian and Metis content and perspectives. By the mid 1990's all Saskatchewan curricula were to include Indian and Metis content and perspectives (Saskatchewan Education, 1989).

In my teaching experience, the initiative to incorporate Aboriginal content within the current curriculum may not have been supported in such a way as to assist teachers with this task. An important aspect of this study was that it examined the experiences of teachers in the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.

It is my belief that in order for Aboriginal people of the sixth and seventh generations to be successful in a school system, that all children in the school system must have the opportunity to experience Aboriginal content and perspectives. Teachers are responsible for giving all children these experiences with Aboriginal content and perspectives in curricula. But how does a teacher make sense of this responsibility and what are their experiences in the implementation of such perspectives and content? My study begins to examine this issue.

Organization of the Study

In the next chapters of this thesis I will first explore literature about Aboriginal content and perspectives and about the implementation of education initiatives (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, I describe my research methodology, in Chapter 4, I provide an analysis of the data, and finally, in Chapter 5, I describe

recommendations to Saskatchewan Learning, school divisions, and teachers,
based on the findings of my research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

What are the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within current provincial curricula? The following review examines two issues that are crucial to answering and understanding the above research question. First an examination of the history of how the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives came to be a required initiative in all Saskatchewan schools. The second issue is an examination of implementation and change theory as applied to teachers in an education setting.

Historical Perspective

At the treaty of Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, anno 1744, between the government of Virginia and the Six Nations, the commissioners from Virginia acquainted the Indians, by a speech, that there was at Williamsburg a college with a fund for educating youth and that, if the Chiefs of the Six Nations would send down half a dozen of their sons to that college, the government would take care that they be well provided for and instructed in all the learning of the white people. The Indian's spokesman replied: 'We are convinced that you mean to do us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily. But, you who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things, and you will not therefore take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happens not to be the same as yours. We have had some experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of Northern provinces. They were instructed in all of your sciences. But, when they came back to us, they were bad runners; ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, not kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, not counselors, they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less obligated by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it, and, to

show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them' (Merryfield, 1985, p. 3).

Had the gentlemen of Virginia accepted the Indian spokesmen's offer, the North American education system might be different today. The experience of Aboriginal people in the education system in North America might possibly have had a more positive outcome. But, the offer, along with many others, was not accepted. Today, there exists an education system that many Aboriginal people continue to regard as foreign. Many factors are included in this perception of foreignness, one of which is the lack of control over the following educational issues: policies and procedures, curriculum, funding, jurisdiction, and the institutions including not only the physical base, but also the spiritual base. All of these factors have been traditionally European in design.

The non-Aboriginal community must come to the realization that the Aboriginal community has much to contribute to the education system. It is a disservice to all members of society when many of the members of that society limit themselves to one view or perspective. At the present, a large number of the non-Aboriginal community continues to deny all students the opportunity to benefit from a truly dynamic education, one that would be relevant and important to each individual. Since before the first meeting, between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, the Aboriginal people have had a wealth of knowledge that they have freely offered the non-Aboriginal people. A few examples are the use of anesthetics in surgery, a wide variety of drugs and medicines including aspirin, many aspects of farming, and a successful model of democracy.

For the most part the current education system has failed to represent Aboriginal people's views. If we are to understand the reason for this failure, we must first examine the initial introduction of the European model of education to Aboriginal people. To accomplish this goal an examination of the underlying philosophies of colonialism and colonization by the dominant society must be examined.

Perley (1993) defines colonialism as "traditionally referring to the establishment of domination over a geographically external political unit" (p. 119). The colonies of the world consisted of people of different race and culture than that of the colonizers. These people, dominated by the colonizers, had their land, natural resources, and labor exploited by the colonizing country.

Perley (1993) further identifies four components of colonialism. They are (a) the dominant society forcing the colonized group to enter a new society, that of the dominant society; (b) the dominant society developing and implementing policies that would hinder or eliminate Aboriginal culture; (c) agents of the colonizing country managing the colonized group; and (d) the dominant society feels justified in the notion that the colonized group is inferior and therefore it is acceptable to dominate, exploit and oppress the colonized group.

Internal colonization is rooted in the above description of colonialism, in which the dominant group holds economic and political power over Aboriginal people. Perley (1993) identifies some of the factors of internal colonization. These include; "(a) displacement of Aboriginal peoples by European expansion; (b) isolation and containment of Aboriginal people inherent in the reservation system; (c) forced assimilation of Aboriginal societies; (d) increasing political

and economic domination of reservation affairs by the colonizers; and (e) the development of a racist ideology portraying Aboriginal people as backward, savage, uncivilized, and childlike” (p. 121).

In this model the dominant group lives within a common boundary of the colonized people but with territorial separation. The separation of Aboriginal people was not only in terms of physical location, but also extended into economic inequality and inferiority in the division of labor. In this state Aboriginal people were kept at a disadvantage in structures that maintained economic control. The dominant society assigned Aboriginal people a place that existed outside of the mainstream. Eventually Aboriginal people were considered irrelevant to the larger society.

The 1960's began to bring about change in terms of education for Aboriginal people. In 1969 the Federal Government proposed a document entitled the “White Paper”, which recognized the imbalance of educational opportunity that confronted Indian and non-Indian children. It proposed that “Indian children no longer be treated as wards of the government but be considered as citizens of the province in which they lived. Thus the education of Indian children would become a provincial responsibility” (Goddard, 1993, p.164). This paper sparked activism in Indian people who wanted the Federal Government to continue honoring the agreements of the Treaties and to remain within that jurisdiction.

In 1972 the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) responded to the White Paper with a position paper entitled “Indian Control of Indian Education” (Danziger, 1992). This paper not only opposed the Federal Government's intent

to relinquish its administrative responsibilities, but asserted that based on Treaty, Indian communities had the right to control and administer education programs for their children (Battiste & Barman, 1995).

Regardless of whether Aboriginal children were in provincial or band controlled schools, Danziger (1992) states that Aboriginal people believe that the education of the youth “must impart traditional values and a strong sense of cultural identity, pride, and history, as well as training necessary to make a good living in modern society” (p.21).

The National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) identified four reasons for the continued failure of Aboriginal students: “(a) lack of properly trained teachers; (b) lack of adequate facilities; (c) lack of parental involvement; (d) and lack of Indian control of Indian education” (Wall & Madak, 1991, p.44).

In 1973 the Federal Government accepted the response by the NIB and reacted with two objectives. The first objective was to create federally funded regional Indian Cultural Centers throughout Canada. The second objective was that the Federal Government would fund Indian education training centers at various universities throughout Canada (Battiste & Barman, 1995).

The events of the early 1970’s, namely the government document entitled the “White Paper” and the response by the NIB entitled “Indian Control of Indian Education”, served as the impetus to examine Aboriginal education more closely. The implications of these two documents serve to promote positive change in Aboriginal education.

Then, in 1985, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission produced a report entitled “Education Equity for Native Peoples of Saskatchewan.” The

report recommended goals initially set by the Native Curriculum Review Committee. First, all participants in the education system, students and teachers alike, must develop an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal people. Second, both teachers and the curriculum should be sensitive to, and provide relevance by including Aboriginal and Northern issues. Third, the educational institutions should present Aboriginal issues positively and accurately.

In conjunction with the report entitled “Education Equity for Native People of Saskatchewan,” the Native Curriculum Review Committee also established three priorities. First, Native curriculum materials need to be incorporated into the core curriculum of the provincial education system. Second, supplemental materials should be utilized in areas where immediate revision is not foreseen. And the third priority was the need for the development of Native Studies and Native Language Programs (Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, 1985).

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) commissioned a study in 1997 entitled “Saskatchewan and Aboriginal Peoples in the 21st Century: Social, Economic and Political Changes and Challenges”. Although this study conveyed that there had been an increase of Aboriginal peoples participating in all levels of education, there was still an education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The education system was now faced with a significant number of students seeking relevant programming, and those students were Aboriginal. Not only does this impact on the Aboriginal students but also includes the entire Aboriginal community. The following table illustrates

the education gap that existed in 1991 (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 1997, p.88).

Table 2.1 Aboriginal education gap in 1991 – population % age 15 and over.

	Did Not Complete High School Diploma	Received High School Diploma After High School	Some Post Secondary Education Including Trade Certificates
Aboriginal	60.4%	6.6%	41.7%
Non-Aboriginal	44.5%	11.5%	55.3%
Education Gap	15.9%	- 4.9%	- 13.6%

The percentages in the above table do not total 100%. The reason for this is the overlap that exists between the categories. Upon examination of Table 2.1 it would seem obvious that the education systems must continue to do what is necessary in order to ensure a high quality education for all students. All aspects of our education system must be examined and an attempt must be made to identify those aspects that could be adapted in order to provide a higher quality of education for the Aboriginal students. To decrease the education gap, we should consider more seriously the area of curriculum and, more specifically, the initiative to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within the existing curriculum.

Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment produced a document entitled “Indian and Metis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12” (1995). This document established principles that guide the

development of educational programs with respect to Aboriginal people, and cultural content and perspectives. These principles recognize that it is necessary for Aboriginal people to be involved in all aspects of education. It should also be recognized that the current education system was developed by the dominant society whose culture is different from Aboriginal peoples. This document also discussed initiatives that were concerned with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within all existing curricula.

The document “Indian and Metis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12” (1995) states that there are three main curriculum objectives. These objectives are (a) “The inclusion of Indian and Metis content in all core curricula for all students in the province”; (b) “The development and implementation of programs for and about Indian and Metis students, for example: Native Studies”; and (c) “The development, identification, coordination and distribution of instructional resources and locally produced materials for core and other curricula” (p.7). Within these objectives the following provisions are included: the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives for all students; the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives for and about Aboriginal people; and the development and distribution of resource materials. Also contained within this document are directives that relate to the adequacy of all provincial curricula. The emphasis is that Aboriginal people will be represented fairly and accurately in all curricula at all levels. (More specific details regarding the document “Indian and Metis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12” (1995) are referred to in Appendix A.)

Since 1995, Saskatchewan teachers have been asked to implement Aboriginal content and perspectives into their curricula. However, Lacroix and Lundy's (2004) study reveals that there continues to remain an education gap. They have identified the importance of Aboriginal content and perspectives and note the continued "lack of relevant Aboriginal curriculum in schools. Curriculum that includes the perspectives, values, and contributions of Canada's Aboriginal people encourages Aboriginal students to strive for higher academic achievement" (p. 17). The importance of Lacroix and Lundy's (2004) study substantiates the article entitled "Our Children – Keepers of the Sacred Knowledge" (2002) that was produced as a part of the Final Report of the Minister's National Working Group on Education. The article discusses the future of the Aboriginal workforce and the connection to the current education system. The report reveals that within fifteen years approximately 25% to 50% of the elementary students in many of the provinces and territories will be Aboriginal. As stated earlier, the education gap continues to be present. Many Aboriginal students are not completing high school and are not, in many cases, able to proceed to the post secondary level of education. The report entitled "Our Children – Keepers of the Sacred Knowledge" (2002) recognizes that approximately one half of the jobs created in Canada will require a secondary school diploma as the minimum requirement for employment. If the educational situation does not improve for Aboriginal students this report suggests that future employment opportunities for Aboriginal people may be non-existent. One function of our education system is to prepare children for adulthood that includes being viable members of the workforce. The importance of curriculum

extends past formal education into all aspects of an individuals' life. It would seem then that the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is at a critical stage. My study then wants to explore the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers in implementing the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the current provincial curriculum.

Implementation

In my experience the implementation of Aboriginal content and perspectives required many of my colleagues to question their own practice and then change their practice. Including Aboriginal content and perspectives was new for many of my colleagues. Change can be a difficult event for each of us. Emotions such as uncertainty, loss, struggle and fear form barriers that we must overcome in order to accept and be successful with change. Educational change is not different from other changes in our lives. The changes that educators make can either be self determined or imposed.

Fullan (1982) identifies four factors affecting the implementation of initiatives resulting in educational change. They are characteristics of change, characteristics at the school division level, characteristics at the school level and characteristics that are external to the local system.

Fullan (1982) further explains the first of four factors of change, characteristics of change. Fullan (1982) describes the characteristics of change as including the recognition of a need for change, clarity regarding what must be done, simplicity of process, and availability of quality and practical resources. First, to consider change, there should be a need or a perceived need for the change. Fullan (1982) says that if the individual does not recognize the need, he

or she is not as able to recognize the necessity for change. For change to be successful, there needs to be clarity. That is, the participants in the change need to understand exactly what the change involves. If a number of individuals are expected to accept a common change, they have to possess a common understanding of what is involved in the change. Also, if the change is considered to be too complex it may not take place. For change to take place it is necessary for the individuals involved in the change to feel that the task is manageable and will be successful. And finally, the individuals need to feel that the resources available to them are of a quality that would make them truly useful as well as practical.

Fullan (1982) feels the characteristics at the school division level are very important in terms of the support that is offered to the teachers. For implementation to be successful the school division must be very involved and supportive of the teachers. This involvement could come in the form of assisting teachers with new implementations and remaining involved to ensure that all participants are achieving success. Support from the school division could come in the form of professional development situations that would be beneficial to the teachers involved. The school division must also remain a source of support and involvement for as long as is required by all teachers involved.

Fullan (1982) describes the characteristics at the school level as involving the principal and the teachers themselves. First, one of the principal's roles is to serve as a source of guidance for the teachers. The teachers require a sense of the importance that the principal has for the expected implementation. Second, the principal must offer guidance and assistance to the teachers. Third, the teachers

need to support and assist each other. Those teachers who possess more knowledge and/or resources in a particular area need to be willing to assist those who may not have the experiences or knowledge necessary for them to be successful.

The characteristics external to the local system include such areas as the role of the government and external assistance. The governing body of a provinces' or country's education system plays a direct role in the curriculum that is delivered in the education system. Many initiatives that are implemented are established by these external systems (Fullan, 1982).

I collected data for my study five years after the implementation of Saskatchewan Learning's initiative of incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives in curricula. My study, which examined the question "What are the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within current provincial curricula?" explored Fullan's ideas around implementation.

CHAPTER THREE

Design Of The Study

Methods

Research Methods

In order to explore the experiences of selected teachers regarding the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within current provincial curricula, I used both a quantitative and qualitative design to my study. Data were collected first through the use of a survey and secondly through semi-structured interviews. This allowed me the opportunity to compare the data collected from a qualitative as well as a quantitative approach and substantiated the results I received on both tools.

Data Collection Procedures

Survey

Upon receiving permission from three school divisions, a survey was distributed to all teachers in the schools that were to participate in this study. The survey contained three sections. The first section asked for teacher's background information. The second section of the survey contained twenty- two statements about the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. A Likert scale was used for the responses. A Likert scale "Typically asks for the extent of agreement with an attitude item" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 297). Respondents

were asked to describe the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the statements on the Likert-type scale. The specific Likert scale that was used in the survey consisted of the following categories: Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The third section of the survey invited respondents to comment on the issues covered by the survey or other issues they may have with respect to incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I also collected data through four semi-structured interviews. At the end of the survey there was an opportunity for the respondents to indicate if they were interested in taking part in a semi-structured interview. Of the forty-four respondents to the survey, four indicated that they would be interested in taking part in this process. This formed the selection of the participants for the semi-structured interviews.

Typically the interviewer has a choice between structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews. Of the three, the most restrictive to both interviewer and interviewee is the structured interview. "The structured interview involves a series of closed-form questions that either have yes-no answers or can be answered by selecting from among a set of short-answer choices" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 310). The interviewer makes every attempt to ensure that each of the interviews is conducted the same. Each of the questions is asked in the same order and the participants are allowed the same amount of time to respond to each of the questions. The structured interview does not allow for discussion

of the interview questions. In this way the structured interview resembles a survey.

“The semi-structured interview involves asking a series of structured questions and then probing more deeply using open-form questions to obtain additional information” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 310). This form of interview allows the interviewer to maintain control of the issues to be discussed while allowing the participant to explore each of the questions fully.

“The unstructured interview does not involve a detailed interview guide. Instead, the interviewer asks questions that gradually lead the respondent to give the desired information” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 310). This type of interview is very effective when the participant is having difficulty expressing his/her reactions or feelings about the topic being discussed.

The four interviews that were conducted in this study were semi-structured and offered an opportunity for discussion that the survey could not possibly offer. “Interviewing is a human interaction with all of its attendant uncertainties” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.63). That is, the semi-structured interviews allowed the respondent to fully engage in each of the statements on the survey. The comments associated with the interviews served as a guide to assist myself to ensure that I had covered all of the areas I had hoped to. Each of the interviews focused on the individual participant’s experiences and provided the opportunity to discuss each of the areas in a way that was comfortable for him or her. Because of this I felt that I would obtain a better idea of teachers’ experiences with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives than if I utilized a survey alone. I was hoping that the interviews would give me more

specific examples of teachers' experiences with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.

Initially, I had also hoped to also collect data a third way, through a focus group, but unfortunately, none of the participants were interested in taking part in this activity. I wanted to include a focus group to allow the participants the opportunity to further discuss the issues in the survey and interview.

I feel that the methodology that I used was very effective in collecting data for my study. The survey provided me with a descriptive sense of the issues related to the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. The interview portion connected with who I am as an Aboriginal woman. It was important to me that the voices and stories of teachers who were implementing Aboriginal content and perspectives be a part of my work. However, I would have liked the opportunity to conduct a focus group to further investigate the experiences of the teachers involved in my study. But, as I mentioned before, no participants were interested.

Survey

Survey Development

The survey I used for my study contained three sections. In this part of the thesis I will describe the development of each section.

First Section

The first section of the survey (see Appendix B for a copy of the survey) contained three questions. The purpose of the three questions was to gain insight into the teaching experience of the respondents. The first question asked the respondents to identify the range of grade levels they had taught. The second

question asked the teachers to identify subject areas past and present that they had taught. The third question asked the teachers to identify any formal classes they had taken in the area of Native Studies and/or Aboriginal Education.

Second Section

As I considered the questions that I was going to ask in the second section of my survey, I reflected on statements and questions I had heard from teachers with whom I had studied, worked, or had heard about. As a result, many of the questions in the second section of the survey are comments I had heard in the past. One example is question 17, “My subject area has always been taught a specific way. I do not feel it is necessary to change to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives” (see Appendix B for a copy of the survey). For example, I overheard a science teacher comment that science was always taught a certain way and he did not feel it was necessary to change to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives into his program.

Another example is that I once heard teachers comment on a morning radio talk show that they had had enough information on the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives and that it had been “rammed down their throats.” These comments led to the development of questions such as question 14 that states, “I feel I should have the choice to decide if I want to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.” Question 15 was also developed because of those statements: “I am frustrated because I feel I have been forced to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.” Further, in reading Fullan’s “The Meaning of Educational Changes” (1982), “Change may come about either because it is imposed on us... or

because we voluntarily participate in or even initiate change when we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency, or intolerability in our current situation” (p. 25).

The above-mentioned teachers did not seem to be embracing the imposed change nor did they seem to recognize the necessity for change. Based on Fullan’s ideas, it appears that these teachers did not voluntarily participate in the change because they had not experienced dissatisfaction, inconsistency or intolerability in their current situations.

Third Section

The third section of the survey gave respondents the opportunity to comment on issues covered by the survey. I asked the respondents to comment on the issues in the following way “I realize I have only touched upon a few of the issues involved with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the curriculum. At this time I would like to invite you to comment on the issues covered by the survey or other issues you may have regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the curriculum.” In this section respondents were able to freely write their comments.

As I reflected on what I felt was important, it became obvious that the survey needed to contain three sections. The purpose of the first section was to provide background information concerning teacher’s training and teaching experiences. The second section focused on teachers’ experiences with the implementation of curriculum and more specifically the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. And the third section invited the participants to comment on the issues covered by the survey or any other issues

regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the existing curriculum.

Field Testing the Survey

I was interested in the survey statements addressing issues that seemed to be important to teachers. I also wanted the survey to be a useful tool for my study. When I completed a first draft of the survey I invited sixteen teachers with a variety of teaching backgrounds, currently teaching in two different schools, to field-test it. Upon the completion of the field test, I had an opportunity to discuss each statement with the teachers. The teachers felt that the statements were easy to understand and appropriate to the study, therefore no changes were made to the survey. At that point I felt that the development of the survey was complete, and I was able to begin to use it to collect data for my study.

Sample for the Survey

It was my hope to acquire data from teachers teaching in a variety of settings, such as different grade levels and different communities. I felt it was important that the data collected represent teachers from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve because I was hoping my study would reflect the general experiences of all teachers from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve. I also felt it was important that the data represent teachers from a variety of community settings because if the data were collected from an urban, rural, and reserve setting it would again reflect a general sense of the experiences of Saskatchewan teachers. To serve this purpose, I studied one elementary school and one high school from each of the following educational jurisdictions: Saskatoon Public School Division, Saskatchewan Valley School Division, and a Band Controlled School division. I

hoped that these samples would include both Aboriginal and non -Aboriginal teachers.

I initially had to seek formal permission from the senior administration in each jurisdiction to collect data. Each of the three Directors gave me permission to conduct my study and also selected the schools that would be involved. Each of the three Directors selected one elementary and one high school to be involved in the study. I was informed by each of the Directors about the number of surveys I was to provide them in order for each of their teachers at the schools to have one. I was not told how many teachers were at each of the schools: A total of one hundred thirty surveys were distributed to teachers in the six schools. When I prepared the surveys for the teachers I included a letter (see Appendix C) indicating the purpose and the general procedures of the study. A consent form was attached to the letter. If interested, participants then signed the consent form acknowledging that they had been informed that their participation was voluntary. The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time and that in the data analysis and reporting, all participants would be assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Of the one hundred thirty surveys distributed, sixty-nine were sent to the Saskatoon Public, thirty-one sent to Saskatchewan Valley, and thirty were sent to the Band Controlled school divisions. Forty-four of the one hundred thirty surveys distributed were returned to me.

Interviews

At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were invited to identify whether or not they would be willing to take part in a semi-structured interview.

Originally I had planned for as many as ten to twelve respondents who would agree to an interview. But of the forty-four respondents who completed the surveys, only four agreed to take part in an interview.

The interviews focused on the participant's teaching career and on their success with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. More specifically the following ideas framed the semi-structured interviews: their teaching careers, their experiences in implementing curricula from Saskatchewan Learning and incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives, their academic preparation and professional development for incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives, and their understanding of the term Aboriginal content and perspectives (please see Appendix D for the complete set of questions).

The participants were told that the data from their interview would be written in the form of a narrative account as an interpretation of the transcript (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Glanfield, 2003). At the conclusion of each of the four interviews I asked the participants how they would like me to tell their story. At that time each of the participants was given the time they needed to make me aware of what they felt was important. The participants and I felt it was crucial that I was able to tell each of their stories as accurately as possible. Once transcribed, each of the participants was given a copy of their interview. At this time they each had the opportunity to make any additions or deletions to the data. It was from the revised transcripts that I created the narrative accounts.

In this chapter I described the way in which I collected data in order to explore the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives

within current provincial curricula. In the next chapter I will provide an analysis of the data I collected through both the surveys and the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis

In this chapter I will provide my analysis of the data collected through the survey and semi-structured interviews. The data collected from the surveys and the interviews were carefully analyzed. Pseudonyms are used in this thesis and every attempt has been made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Survey Data Analysis

Forty-four of the one hundred-thirty surveys' distributed were returned. Not all teachers answered all of the questions. The survey contained three sections. The first section included three questions intended to provide background information concerning teacher's training and teaching experiences. The second section focused on teachers' experiences with implementation of curriculum and, more specifically, the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. The third section invited the respondents to comment on the issues covered by the survey or any other issues regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspective within the existing curriculum in an open-ended way. Of the forty-four surveys returned only ten of the respondents made additional comments. Because so few respondents took advantage of the opportunity to make comments a meaningful analysis of this section was not possible.

Section One

The first question in this section of the survey asked teachers to identify the range of levels of their teaching experience. Table 4.1 is designed to show the grade-level teaching experiences of the teachers who responded to the survey.

Table 4.1 Grade level of teaching experiences of survey respondents.

Grades of Teaching Experience	K – 5	6 - 9	10 – 12	More Than One Range of Grade Level
Number of Respondents	15	10	8	11

Table 4.1 identifies the teaching experience of the forty-four respondents. Of those forty-four respondents, approximately one third had experience teaching Kindergarten to Grade Five; approximately one quarter had teaching experience in grades six to nine; and approximately one fifth only taught grades ten through twelve.

Eleven of the forty-four respondents identified more than one range of grade level of teaching experience: five of these respondents had experience at Kindergarten to Grade Nine; two of the respondents had experience Grades Six through Twelve; and four of the respondents had experience at all three ranges of grade levels.

Question 2 in the first section of the survey was an open-ended question that asked teachers to identify the subject areas they were responsible for, both

past and present. Of the forty-four respondents to the survey, six did not respond to this question.

As I reviewed the responses to question 2 I noticed a pattern evolving. It appeared that the respondents had teaching experience in either all core subject areas or in a select few, hence the reason I've selected the categories that I have to show the responses of the respondents in the following table. Table 4.2 refers to core subject areas. What I mean by core subject are all subject areas that Saskatchewan Education requires all students to complete. These subject areas include Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, Physical Education, and Health Sciences. Table 4.2 also refers to courses in Aboriginal Education.³

Table 4.2 Subject areas, past and present, for which the respondents have been responsible.

Subject Areas You Have Been Responsible For Teaching	All core subjects	Less than 4 core subject areas	At least one course in Aboriginal Education	Did not respond
Number of Responses	24	10	4	6

Table 4.2 shows that thirty-eight of the forty-four respondents responded to this question while six of the respondents chose not to. Of the thirty-eight

³ For the purposes of this study the term Aboriginal Education will refer to all courses in Native Studies, Native Language Programs, or any courses focusing on Aboriginal Education.

respondents who did respond to question 2, about twenty-four have had teaching experiences in all core subject areas. This may be a result of the high number of elementary teachers who responded to the survey. Ten of the thirty-eight respondents have taught four or less core subject areas and four have had the opportunity to teach courses in Aboriginal education⁴.

The third question in the first section of the survey asked teachers to identify all the formal classes they had taken in Native Studies and Aboriginal Education. By this I mean any post-secondary courses that focus on Aboriginal culture, traditions, language, history, and contemporary issues. Table 4.3 shows the results of the responses that examine the formal classes the respondents have taken in the area of Aboriginal Education.

⁴ Although this represents approximately ten percent of the respondents to this question I personally find this percentage to be disturbingly low. I wonder if it is possible for teachers to believe that the incorporation Aboriginal content and perspectives is a critical issue if the schools and school divisions are not prepared to offer courses in Aboriginal Education to the students? The Native Curriculum Review Committee established three priorities in their report. The third priority is the need for the development of Native Studies and Native Language programs. Although it is true that programs of these types are being developed we can see from the surveys that very few teachers have the opportunity to teach in this area. In question 2 only four of the respondents have had the opportunity to teach a Native Studies or Aboriginal Education class. Native Studies is one of the Social Sciences along with subjects such as Social Studies and History. But only one of these must be provided for the students. This means that if a school offers History for example, they are not required to offer Native Studies.

Table 4.3 Formal classes in Aboriginal Education taken by the respondents.

All Formal Classes You Have Taken In The Area Of Aboriginal Education	1 course in Aboriginal Education	2 - 4 courses in Aboriginal Education	More than 4 courses in Aboriginal Education	None were listed
Number of Respondents	4	7	3	30

Since 2000, it has been mandatory for all students graduating from a College of Education in the province of Saskatchewan to complete at least one course in Aboriginal Education. As stated earlier, the term Aboriginal Education will refer to and include all courses in Native Studies, Native Language Programs, or any courses focusing on Aboriginal Education. This includes courses that focus on Aboriginal cultures, traditions, history, language, or contemporary issues. Of the forty-four respondents approximately one third have taken courses in this area. There is no way of knowing from the information on the surveys how many of the respondents graduated from a College of Education prior to the implementation of the initiative that required graduates to have taken at least one course in Native Studies or Aboriginal Education. Also the respondents were asked to list by institution and course number any formal classes they had taken in the area of Aboriginal Education. Thirty of the respondents did not list any courses in Aboriginal Education. It might be

assumed that the thirty participants had not taken any courses in Aboriginal Education.

Section Two

Many of the statements in this section of the analysis use the phrase “Incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.” When discussing data collected from the surveys and my analysis of that data, I will abbreviate the phrase “Incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives” as “IAC&P”. In the table that follows, I present the questions from the survey as statements in order to better format the tables. Although each statement is an abbreviated form of the question, I feel that the statements have not changed the intent of the question.

The second section of the survey focused on teacher’s experiences with implementation of curriculum and more specifically with the IAC&P. Table 4.4 shows the responses to each of the questions in section two.

Table 4.4 Curriculum implementation and the IAC&P of the survey respondents.

Statements to be Considered	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Undecided	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
4. Is the same as the incorporation of other curriculum	16	16	12
5. Opportunity to incorporate within my program	32	4	8
6. Aware of resource materials	21	7	16
7. Aware of resource people	15	12	16
8. Have been successful with IAC&P	18	12	12
9. Have support from administration in implementing the IAC&P	28	13	3
10. Have received sufficient professional development on implementing IAC&P	15	12	17
11. The IAC&P is a part of core subject curriculum	22	16	6
12. Specific subject areas more suited for IAC&P	34	7	3

Statements to be Considered	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Undecided	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
13. I have done all I can to IAC&P	17	14	12
14. I should have the choice to IAC&P	18	11	15
15. I am frustrated because I feel I have been forced to IAC&P	5	7	32
16. I do not see where IAC&P would apply to my program	7	5	32
17. My subject area has always been taught a certain way and I do not feel it is necessary to change to IAC&P	8	9	27
18. I feel we should spend more time on developing the IAC&P	30	7	7
19. I have found it difficult to IAC&P	22	7	15
20. I would welcome assistance with the IAC&P	36	6	2

Statements to be considered	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Undecided	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
21. My experience with implementing new curriculum has been successful	30	13	1
22. My administrator has made efforts to assist me in implementing new curriculum	29	13	2
23. My colleagues and I assist each other with implementing new curriculum	22	17	4

What does the survey tell us about teachers' experiences in IAC&P? The data suggests that individually teachers have a feeling of success when implementing new curriculum as revealed in question 21 with thirty of the forty-four respondents agreeing to the statement. Question 22 shows twenty-nine of the forty-four respondents have had assistance from their administrators in implementing new curriculum. As well, question 23 has twenty-two of the forty-four respondents state that their colleagues and themselves assist each other with the implementation of new curriculum. This data would suggest that the teachers who responded to my survey feel comfortable and have support when implementing new curricula. These respondents also suggest, however, that the IAC& P is similar to implementing content curriculum (see results of question

4). There appears to be some confusion among the respondents however, when in question 11 half of the respondents indicate that the IAC&P is a part of core subject curriculum, not necessarily a “curriculum” on its own like a content curriculum. Further confusion appears to arise when we examine the responses to question 11 and the responses to question 14. In Saskatchewan, teachers do not have a choice in the implementation of core subject curriculum (question 11), yet about half of the respondents believe that they should have a choice in the IAC&P (question 14). Question 9 has 28 of the respondents stating they have support from their administrator in implementing the IAC&P. However, question 8 reveals that only eighteen of the respondents feel they have been successful with the IAC&P and in question 13, only seventeen of the respondents feel they have done all they can to IAC&P within their existing programs. Overall, these findings appear to relate to the work of Lieberman and Miller (1981) that suggests change is a developmental process. Respondents to this survey would appear to be at “different places” in the IAC&P. This data might also speak to the degree to which people are implementing the IAC&P, and that that degree would be individual in nature. In other words, the implementation of the IAC&P takes time.

Thirty-four of the respondents in question 12 feel some subject areas are more suited to the IAC&P. However question 5 reveals that thirty-two of the respondents recognize areas within their programs where it is possible to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives and question 16 has thirty-two respondents stating they can see where the IAC&P would apply to their programs. Although twenty-seven respondents to question 17 do not appear to

resist the changes necessary to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives, yet question 12 might suggest that thirty-four of the respondents are having difficulty recognizing exactly how it is possible IAC&P in specific subject areas. This is further supported by the responses to question 19 when twenty-two respondents revealed that they have found it difficult to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives and in question 20 when thirty-six respondents would welcome assistance with the IAC&P. Because teachers would welcome assistance in implementing the IAC&P and have suggested that they've found it difficult incorporating the initiative into their subject areas and do not appear to resist the possibility of incorporation this might suggest that they acknowledge and are aware of the importance of the initiative and the benefit to students in the classroom (Lieberman & Miller, 1981). This data might suggest that teachers acknowledge the importance of the IAC&P.

This survey data also suggests that teachers require further support for the IAC&P. One form of support could be in terms of professional development, which is different than the awareness of resources. Even though about half the respondents were aware of resource materials (question 6) and about one third of the respondents were aware of resource people (question 7), only fifteen of the forty-four respondents felt they had received sufficient professional development (question 10) on the implementation of the IAC&P and thirty of the respondents express in question 18 that more time should be spent on the development of the IAC&P. The responses to these questions (6, 7, 10, and 18) appear to support Lieberman and Miller's finding that "teachers want and need training in new ideas and techniques that not only is rich in information but also provides support

for trying out the new techniques in their classrooms” (1981, p. 53). Hence it would appear that further supports are needed for the implementation of the IAC&P.

Final Comments About the Survey Data

The surveys served the purpose of giving me a general idea of the experiences teachers have in terms of the IAC&P. When examining the responses to the survey questions they seemed to support the work of Lieberman and Miller (1981). Three themes emerged from the data analysis. The three themes were: the implementation of the IAC&P takes time; teachers acknowledge the importance of the IAC&P; and further supports are needed for the implementation of the IAC&P.

The three themes identified in the surveys are closely connected. Both Fullan (1982) and the document entitled “Indian and Metis Education Policy From Kindergarten to Grade 12” (1995) stress the importance of resources as a necessary component to the successful IAC&P. The data from the survey seems to support this. Teachers reveal that although they have support and assistance with the IAC&P they continue to struggle with this incorporation. Teachers have identified lack of awareness of resources as a barrier to successful IAC&P.

From the data in the surveys, I learned that these teachers feel that the IAC&P is an important initiative with which they would like to become more involved. I have also learned that these teachers do not feel that they are incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives as much as they would like. And finally, teachers require further supports for the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.

As presented in the above data analysis of the survey it might be suggested that teachers do feel that the IAC&P is an important initiative. This would support the report produced in 1985 by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission entitled "Education Equity for Native People of Saskatchewan". Two of the recommendations of this report were as follows. First, all participants in the education systems must develop an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal people. Second, Aboriginal issues, content and perspectives must be presented in a positive and accurate fashion. From this study, it is obvious that teachers recognize the importance of this initiative and are willing, for the most part, to invest the time and effort required for them to be successful with the IAC&P. The importance of the IAC&P is supported by Danziger's (1992) conclusion that the education of Aboriginal children must encompass Aboriginal cultures and traditions. This is necessary in order for the Aboriginal children to find success, enrichment and satisfaction from the education system. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, many Aboriginal people devoted their efforts toward making the individuals in the education system realize that it was absolutely necessary to include Aboriginal content and perspectives within the curriculum in order for Aboriginal children to experience some degree of success in what had been a foreign education system. As the decades passed it was realized that not only is it important for the Aboriginal students, but it is equally important for the non-Aboriginal students to be exposed to Aboriginal content and perspectives. This is evident in the fact that all Saskatchewan curricula currently require the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives to be taught. For many non-Aboriginal students the only exposure they have to the customs,

culture, life styles and history of Aboriginal people may be obtained through the education system.

As a required element in all Saskatchewan curricula, the IAC&P is not recognized by all teachers as being necessary. As Fullan (1982) explains, there must exist need, clarity, complexity, and quality and practicality for change to occur. For many teachers one or more of these characteristics was absent, stifling the process of change.

At the conclusion of the survey, four teachers agreed to take part in the semi-structured interview.

Interview Data Analysis

The narrative accounts that follow are the stories of Jamie, Kelly, Pat and Alex, four teachers at four different levels of development in their professional journey toward fully incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives within the programs. Following the four narrative accounts, I provide my analysis of them.

The interviews were recorded via audio- tape and were transcribed. Each participant was given a copy of their transcript, asked to make any changes they wished and were asked which part(s) of the transcript best reflected what they felt was important about their story of IAC&P. I then wrote the narrative accounts as a way to tell the stories of the four teachers.

Jamie's Story

I understand that you want me to discuss my experience teaching and more specifically how I incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives.

Well, I guess the teaching profession just sort of snuck up on me. I didn't grow up with ambitions of becoming a teacher. Actually, I began university in Arts and Sciences. I was hoping to get into pharmacy. A few of my friends were taking the same biology class as I was. They were in Education. After talking to them I thought teaching might be all right.

My decision to switch from pharmacy to education was based on a couple of things I guess. I was the oldest in my family and I was used to being around my little brother and our cousins. Because of this I thought I would probably like working with kids. As a kid I liked school even though we moved around a lot. So teaching seemed like a pretty good way to make a living. It seemed like it would be a pretty good career. Oh ya, and it was supposed to be a profession you could get a job in pretty easily.

My convocation from the College of Education was in 1993. Since then I've had a few teaching assignments. One of my assignments was at a Band controlled school. That was a very different experience. The community was heavily involved in the school. Although we followed Saskatchewan Curriculum, the children's education included a variety of cultural events and teachings.

Throughout the school year Elders and other community members were involved with the students. The incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives was pretty much taken care of by those individuals. I also learned a lot about Aboriginal people. I think it was really important for those students to have the cultural experiences that they did. I mean the school population was 100% Native so it made a lot of sense to have Aboriginal content and perspectives in the school.

Now that I'm teaching in rural Saskatchewan, there are a wide variety of cultures in my class. We have had clear direction from our administrator to the importance of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives, but I feel a bit torn. I feel that it is not fair to focus more on one culture than another. I want this point to be very clear. Sure, if you're teaching Social Studies you can slip in some stuff, but it is more difficult in other subject areas. Also, I have found three barriers to my incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. First, I found that it was very difficult to find resources and materials to use in my teaching. Second, when I could find resources I found that a lot of the time they were of poor quality. Also, a lot of the resources are expensive. I think it's because resources about Aboriginal content is not something all North Americans for example, care about. So to make materials for such a small market is expensive. I mean who else in the world cares about Canada and the people of Canada. It's even worse when you're talking about Aboriginal type things. And third, when you look in the curriculum guides they say things like "invite an Elder into your classroom". Well, that's what I do not like about curriculum guides. They tell you to do these things and there is nothing prepared for the teacher. It's just an idea and the teacher is expected to put it all together. Well, we all know that teachers don't have a lot of extra time. This is why on the Reserve it was a lot easier for the Elders to come in and teach it to the kids.

When I was teaching on the Reserve I learned that there were certain protocols that needed to be followed when dealing with the Elders and with cultural events and teachings. The protocol seems to me to be a hassle. I don't know why we've got to go through all of that. I mean, if I want someone from

the symphony to come to my class and talk about instruments all I have to do is phone and ask. But that's not how it is when you invite someone to come into your classroom to talk about Aboriginal things.

Well I guess in wrapping up I would again like to stress the importance of addressing all of the cultures. I do not think we should focus on one particular culture over the others. I mean I've got kids in my class who are Asian, Ukrainian, German, and a lot of other cultures. So we need to think of everyone in our classrooms. Also I have not found opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives into the areas that I teach. Finally, if they want people to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives, the resources have to be of better quality and lower in cost.

Kelly's Story

I never really thought about being anything but a teacher. My father and grandfather are both teachers. I just feel really fortunate that I enjoy teaching. I'm not sure what else I would do.

I've been teaching now for seventeen years. I have spent the past fifteen or so years in this school. My teaching experience has been primarily within the field of special education. Over the course of my career I have seen a lot of initiatives come and go. Some of these initiatives have been positive and lasted over an extended time period. Others have come, like a flash in the pan, and then gone almost in the same breath. That's the thing about education. When you find something that is good and works, it lasts. But if something is not good, it doesn't take long at all for the students and the teachers to recognize that it is a fad and not worth one's time and effort.

One of the initiatives that have been brought forth is the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. To my knowledge this was first introduced about fifteen years ago. This is one of the initiatives that has lasted over the course of a number of years.

I admit that I have not done as much in this area as I would like to. I feel frustrated because I am not sure where to begin or where to turn for help. Teachers are given assistance and guides for all of the subject areas. If you are teaching math for example, you can get materials and guides to help you develop your program. I feel that this is an important initiative and needs to be implemented much more effectively than it has. But, there does not seem to be the same support when it comes to the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives into the curriculum.

It would be helpful if there were packages of information and concrete suggestions on how we can incorporate this content and perspective in an effective way. We need materials that are teacher friendly, ones that help us step-by-step. I know that if I felt that these materials were available to me I would get them and implement them. I feel that it is very important that all teachers are able to fulfill this requirement. However, it is difficult when teachers are feeling frustrated and isolated.

I really hope to feel comfortable enough to feel as if I am really incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives within the areas that I teach. I know that I will need guidance from someone knowledgeable in this area to help me get started. I hope this opportunity exists for me.

Pat's Story

I would say the reason I chose teaching, as a profession is that I grew up in a home where my parents believe strongly in living a life of service and serving the community. Serving others was always important to my family. That is probably the main reason I went into teaching. I consider teaching to be a service, a service to children in particular, but also to their parents. I also thought I would enjoy working with children. Teaching just seemed to be a good career choice for me.

I have been teaching now for over twenty years. When I was involved in my undergraduate studies I did not take any courses that involved Native Studies or Cross-Cultural Studies. However, when I was working toward my Masters I took Aboriginal Education or Native Education and Administration. I also took reading courses along the line of Aboriginal Education. These courses were the basis for my project.

I have had the opportunity to teach in a variety of settings as well as in a variety of roles. Currently I am the principal of an elementary school. I have also held the position of principal in another province on an Indian Reserve there. Prior to being a principal I was a classroom teacher in a variety of settings.

Throughout my career I have had many opportunities for implementing new curriculum. Every time you have a new curriculum to work with, growing pains are involved. You look at this massive binder and it has all of these things in it from philosophical goals to, in some cases, fairly structured activities that are laid out for you. Initially it's a bit overwhelming. But I would suggest that the ease of implementation depends largely on the kind of professional

development that has gone along with the early implementation. Of course as time goes on you become more familiar with the document, the curriculum guide. But initially there is so much there, that you need to have some guidance and direction.

The lack of support to teachers in regard to the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives concerns me. Recently I was at a session at an Admin Conference on the incorporation of Aboriginal education into the curriculum. At this session they mentioned things like offering a gift of tobacco as part of proper protocol. I didn't know about this. There are a lot of other things that I am totally clued out on but where do you start with that? And where does the direction come from? I know as teachers we have responsibility to become familiar with the curriculum and all that it includes but somehow issues like the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives should be more manageable. It just feels like it's out there somewhere but I don't really know where to pull it in from.

Aside from the one Admin Conference I do not recall any professional development being offered to administrators or teachers within our division. I do not recall there being sessions on how to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives. We have common curriculum days where we sit down and talk about the language arts program or the social studies program or any of the other programs we offer. That is just an expectation of teachers to gain knowledge on how to use these new resources and materials. And yet there has never been one that I can remember in my school division that dealt strictly with Aboriginal

Education and incorporating it into the various curriculum. And I've taught in this division for twenty years now.

We have however, had the opportunity to work with Cultural Coordinators. They work as cultural liaisons between the school and the Aboriginal community. This made things a lot easier because the coordinator knew who to get in contact with and those sorts of things. Unfortunately, we no longer have that position within our school. The focus was shifted to more counseling for the students, a service that is also greatly needed.

I have some very rich life experiences that I feel aid me with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. For one year my spouse and I taught in a First Nations school in another province. I was the principal. This was a daunting task for me initially to be placed in a setting without having a whole lot of knowledge about the culture. But I had an administrative assistant who I met with daily to gain as much knowledge as possible. My spouse and I would also attend as many cultural events as possible. The community really embraced us. They were just very warm and accepting of us as teachers in their community. It was an incredibly rich experience getting to know the culture and feeling accepted as basically an outsider. I suppose we were kind of adopted into the community.

Unfortunately, my experiences at home are not as rich as my year in the other province. I have lived basically all of my life on a farm adjacent to an Indian Reserve. Yet, I know so little about the culture. I do know a lot about the historical stuff, what it used to be like here for the Plains Cree. But, I really don't know much about the culture. I have attended Pow Wows; that is a start. But I

would like to experience more. For example I would like to go sit in on a Sweat some time, you know that kind of thing. But then I don't know who to get in touch with to be able to experience these things. I think that's something that we as educators should do, to become familiar with the current traditions and the current cultural events that are still so important to the Aboriginal community. I think we are really kind of out of touch with that.

As I mentioned earlier I've been to a couple of Pow Wows and I was fortunate enough one time to be sitting beside a woman I had taken a class with a couple of years ago when I was working on my Masters. She was very helpful and kind as she explained to me the significance of the different dances and the outfits that the dancers wear. I wish I could experience more like this. I know we could learn a lot from our neighbors.

This has always been a frustration for me. I would like to be a bridge builder between our two communities. And yet I'm really at a loss as to how to do that. As the principal of an elementary school how do I bridge these two communities? I don't know and it's caused frustration for me for a long time now. Of course there are no easy answers, but I think being aware of each other's cultures is critical. Even if it was something as simple as our church community getting together with the people from the neighboring reserve to share our cultures with each other.

As an educator I feel that it is very important that we do all that we can to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within the existing curriculum. Some areas are much easier than others. I find the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives into the Social Studies curriculum to be quite easy. We

learn a lot about history and such. What I find difficult is the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives into the other curriculum. I do not know how to apply this incorporation to science, health, math and all of the other areas.

I feel we need two sources of support to be really successful with this endeavor. The first source of support would have to come from the school division. We need to have more in-services on the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. This would help to ensure that everyone was able to participate in this incorporation. The second would be from the Aboriginal community. I feel that some of the responsibility should go back to the Aboriginal community and somehow they avail themselves and maybe send out information to administrators saying “these are the resources”.

I feel the more we learn and know about each other the more mutual respect there will be. I have a desire to learn about Native Spirituality and to share my Christian religion. I feel the two are much more closely related than we think. Also I think we should know things such as what is involved in the Native community in a year to celebrate life. How do you celebrate birthdays? How do you celebrate the changing of the seasons? How do you celebrate the passing of time? I come from a certain background that has certain celebrations in a year. I cling to those, I’m a traditionalist of sorts, and yet I thirst for knowledge in knowing how other peoples celebrate the same things. I think it is sad how polarized we have all become. We as Canadians pull apart rather than pulling together to celebrate our diversity and trying to learn from each other.

Alex's story

I was born in Northern Saskatchewan and lived there until I was about seven years old. At that time my parents divorced and my mom, four sisters and I moved to Saskatoon. I have spent most of my life as an Urban Indian, non-status Urban Indian until Bill C-31 came into effect. It was then that I got my status back.

I had a very difficult childhood. Because of the way I was made to feel in school, my self esteem was lowered so much because of who I was, or the perception of who I was. When I look back I know that is why I am such an advocate for Aboriginal Education. There are many paths that a person can choose from in one's life. In difficult situations you can give up I guess. But I took another path. I felt I needed to make a change in some way and really work toward rebuilding a strong identity in Aboriginal children. I also believe that the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is very, very important for the non-Aboriginal community. I think a lot of the misconceptions and stereotypes are a product of ignorance. I do not mean ignorance in a bad way but in a lack of knowledge. It was through education that a lot of the colonizing took place. Because of the education system a lot of things were allowed to happen to Aboriginal people. I'm a firm believer, and quite an optimist - I think through education we can broaden people's knowledge and minds.

My sister had just graduated from ITEP (Indian Teacher Education Program) and I was working at SIFC (Saskatchewan Indian Federated College) in Regina. At that time I really wanted to go back to university. It was my sister who suggested that I start the ITEP program, just to get back into post secondary

education. Well, I went through the program and I absolutely loved it because it was specifically Aboriginal Education. If I had enrolled in the mainstream education program I don't think I would have liked it as much. From there I did the four years that included my internship in Saskatoon in a suburban middle class white neighborhood. It was really fun. However, I knew in my heart that I wanted to teach First Nations students, so I've only taught on reserves specifically. Ya, that is where my heart is and so here I am.

In my five years of teaching I have attended many in-services on a variety of issues and topics. But I have never attended an in-service that dealt specifically with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. I have however attended many valuable conferences that have helped to support me in this area.

As do all teachers, I bring my life experiences into my teaching. The incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is very natural to me because of my life experiences. I would say that I incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives into all areas that I teach on a regular and ongoing basis. To discuss how I bring Aboriginal content and perspectives into my teaching I would have to break it into two different areas. The first one is what you can call pan-Indian education. This includes a lot of what is being taught. We teach Cree stories, Ojibway stories or teach about different artists but it is not specific to these kids. Another part of this is that if a school happens to have an Aboriginal person on staff many of the staff members automatically assume that the Aboriginal teacher is speaking for all Aboriginal people. It is often assumed that the Aboriginal teachers know everything about all Aboriginal cultures. Many are

expected to become a spokesperson for all Aboriginal cultures even though they may not necessarily be familiar with them all. So some non-Native teachers would say “What do Indians think about this?” or whatever. What they do is blanket a whole culture or cultures based on one person’s knowledge. I find that in areas such as this there are a lot of resources one can use. But I feel the important thing is not only that we are teaching about such things as perhaps the Totem Pole. This is what I think of as incorporating Aboriginal content into curriculum. The really important issue is the incorporation of Aboriginal perspective within the curriculum. What does the Totem Pole mean for the people, what is the history behind it, what would the cultures who make Totem Poles tell us about the cultural significance of the Totem Pole.

We need to take a look at the cultures, at the beliefs of the cultures and why things are the way they are. All too often we do not access our human resources and do not get perspectives from these people who are such valuable sources of information. We need to do more than just look at the outside or the overall picture. We need to dig much deeper and seek out the perspectives. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a lot of resources in the area of perspective rather than just content.

Much of the time the content that is presented is historical, based almost entirely on Indians in the past. It is as if Aboriginal people do not exist anymore. Contemporary issues are often ignored. We do not look at issues and the underlying problems. We do not look at the effects of colonialism, or residential schools on these cultures that are devastating. It seems that when we incorporate

content we choose that which is safe, things that don't really deal with the problems.

The other area I need to mention is Tribally specific education. I feel the kids are really lacking in their Tribal education, Tribal histories, or Tribal knowledge. Because of all of the effects of colonialism, the kids are missing a lot of their background and in many cases they are not getting it. There are not a lot of resources for these kinds of teachings.

To address this issue I have created my own curriculum in Social Studies. These units center round the events that make up the Tribal history of this community. We have utilized the Elders and other resource people in the community. A part of this unit was to create a museum based on the information and facts that we had uncovered. When our museum was complete we invited the community to come and go through it. This was a big success and everyone was very pleased with the accomplishments of the students.

I feel strongly that the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is very important. There are so many misconceptions and stereotypes out there about Aboriginal people. Too many non-Native people go through their lives with these misunderstandings. They need to take off their cloak of what their understandings are. They need to remove what they think and start over absolutely fresh. One cannot be afraid to go out and find information. I think that's what really holds back a lot of people. It is a fear of the unknown, the different. They just need to move toward a new understanding with an open heart and not any of these preconceived ideas that they've had in the past.

The media are a strong force in perpetuating these misconceptions. Unfortunately this is where many non-Native people get their information. Because of a lack of life experiences involving Aboriginal people they accept things such as the media as a reliable source.

Well, I guess I should begin to wrap things up. I believe education is a powerful tool that has the power to harm as well as heal. We must learn how to use it effectively when dealing with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives. We must continue to work toward every teacher being able to undertake this task in a responsible and respectful way.

Analysis of the Narrative Accounts

I feel very fortunate to have these four narratives. Writing narratives is one form of interpreting the data collected from the interviews. “We imagine, therefore, that in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story, and reliving a life story” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 71). Every attempt was made to ensure the narratives echo the participants’ experiences. These four narrative accounts describe teachers who are at different places in their professional journey toward full IAC&P. Jamie’s story is about an individual who does not really incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives into the curriculum. Perhaps Jamie feels that the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is not the same as the incorporation of other curricula. The findings of the survey show that twelve of the participants also felt this way.

Jamie feels that it is important for children at band controlled schools to have Aboriginal content and perspectives in their daily academic studies. In the

interview Jamie talks about Elders and other community members involvement with the students at the Band Controlled School. Jamie says "It's kind of different when you...teach on a reserve school. I mean all your kids are First Nations. I mean there's a hundred different ways to do it. "

However, Jamie feels that in all other education systems we should not focus on one group in particular. Instead we should touch on all of the cultures in our classrooms. Jamie explains this by saying "the expectation of the amount you have to do it (the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives) is you know less because there are different needs, different concerns to be addressed." Jamie does not seem to recognize the value of Aboriginal content and perspectives for all children in the education system. This is unfortunate because traditionally the European model of education not only emphasizes European culture, but also devalues Aboriginal cultures. In the past this has left little opportunity for success for Aboriginal students. Even today this lack of success results in high drop-out rates among Aboriginal students when compared to non-Aboriginal students. Much of society assumes that there is a problem in Indian society that must be corrected. Price (1978) states that "Dropping out of high school which is irrelevant to one's home life, perhaps alienating to one's home community, and destructive to one's home culture might be the healthiest thing an individual could do. The problem of Indian education lies more with the existing character of the education than with Indian society" (p. 264).

Much of the existing character of our current education system lies within the curriculum that continues to focus on European content and perspectives. We must alter that character and bring a balance to the content and perspectives that

are presented within our classrooms in order for all students to experience success. Ermine (1995) says that the arrival of Europeans brought about the first meeting of two very different worldviews and approaches to education, “one was bound for an uncharted destination in outer space, the physical, and the other was on a delicate path into inner space, the metaphysical” (p. 101). Since the meeting of these two different world-views and approaches to education Aboriginal people have struggled with an education system that is irrelevant to them.

Kelly shares with us a desire to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives but admits that it is a great struggle. Kelly talked about lack of knowledge concerning the availability of resources. When asked if resources were more accessible would Kelly be more apt to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives Kelly replied by saying “Definitely, because I mean it is like content in most curriculum.” Kelly is experiencing a feeling of isolation, unsure of how to begin to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives, or where to locate resources. Responses to questions 6 and 7 in the survey indicate that sixteen of the respondents were also unaware of where to locate resource materials and resource people. Kelly would welcome any assistance that would make it possible to be successful with this initiative. This welcoming of assistance was also revealed very strongly in the survey when in question 20 thirty-six respondents said they would welcome assistance.

It is evident that the recommendations, set forth by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and the Native Curriculum Review Committee have not yet been implemented. Very few Native curriculum materials have been incorporated into the core curriculum of the provincial education system. Kelly

supports this in the interview by saying “As far as teacher made material, I don’t know...No I wouldn’t know where [to locate Aboriginal materials].”

It is my opinion, based on my own personal experience, that there is very little if any guidance to assist struggling teachers in this area. Also, few supplemental materials have been made available to teachers that would assist them with the IAC&P.

Pat is an administrator who feels very strongly that the IAC&P is a crucial initiative. When discussing the IAC&P Pat says “We have responsibility to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspective as teachers, but somehow it should be more manageable or easy you know.” Pat has tried many methods and uses many resources to bring this perspective into the classroom. Although Pat feels some success, there is a desire to be able to do more in this area. This is a source of frustration for Pat, who feels at a loss at times as to how to continue with the IAC&P. Pat says “ The first subject area I think of right immediately is Social Studies, because its part of the heritage unit for example... Its a little bit more difficult to incorporate it [Aboriginal content and perspectives] into let’s say Science or Health or even into other units of study in Social Studies.”

Although Pat feels successful much of the time in the area of Aboriginal content and perspectives, there remains frustration. Once again, we have evidence that teachers are not fully aware of resources and resource people available to them. This would correspond to the data revealed in the surveys. Results of questions 6 and 7 on the survey identify twenty-one and fifteen respondents respectively were aware of where to locate resource materials and resource people. This represents less than one half of the respondents. This

barrier seems to be one of the main reasons teachers are hesitant or unable to be successful in incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives. It is difficult for teachers to be successful implementing anything if they do not have access to the required resources, or the knowledge concerning how to locate the resources. Along with this barrier is a sense of isolation for many teachers. Not only do they not know where to locate resources, they do not know where to go or who to approach for assistance in this area. As a result some teachers feel that they are in a position in which they cannot attempt the IAC&P successfully.

Alex is very successful with the IAC&P. This initiative is constantly present in Alex's classroom and the curriculum. Many of the lesson and unit plans that Alex uses in the classroom are rich with the IAC&P. The frustration for Alex is how ill equipped many educators are in this area. This frustration goes beyond teaching. For Alex much of the frustration is in the lack of knowledge that non-Native teachers have in terms of Native people. As Alex suggests, people "need to take off their cloaks of what their understandings are. They need to remove what they think and start over completely fresh. One cannot be afraid to go out and find information." Alex feels that people need to shed their misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and open themselves up to the world around them. For too long people have lived in fear, mistrust, and ignorance. Once these cloaks are removed people will become more knowledgeable and in turn be successful with the IAC&P.

As I was analyzing the interviews I realized that the three theme questions I had identified in the surveys pertained also to the interviews. The first theme that emerged from the surveys also pertains equally well to the interviews.

This theme is that the implementation of the IAC&P takes time. Because the time required for each individual varies there exists a wide range of the four participants' ability to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives. Therefore, the degree to which each of the participants is able to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives is not constant.

Jamie has had little, if any, experience with the IAC&P. Jamie says, "When I could find resources I found that a lot of the time they were of poor quality. Also, a lot of the resources are expensive." Because of this lack of quality affordable resources, the degree to which Jamie has incorporated Aboriginal content and perspectives has been restricted. Also, Jamie's philosophy "That it is not fair to focus more on one culture than another" has restricted the degree to which Jamie has attempted this initiative.

Although the degree to which Kelly incorporates Aboriginal content and perspectives is also very limited, Kelly reports, "I admit I have not done as much in this area as I would like to. I feel frustrated because I am not sure where to begin or where to turn for help."

Pat's experiences with the IAC&P are much richer than Kelly's and Jamie's. Pat has had much success with this incorporation but feels there are areas of difficulty. "I find the incorporation of Aboriginal content into the Social Studies curriculum is quite easy. We learn a lot about history and such. What I find difficult is the incorporation of Aboriginal content into the other curriculum. I do not know how to apply this incorporation to science, health, math and all of the other areas." Although Pat has experienced success with the IAC&P into

Social Studies, Pat would like to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within other subject areas.

The degree to which Alex incorporates Aboriginal content and perspectives is impressive. Alex says that the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is an ongoing aspect of all subject areas that Alex is responsible for. Alex has truly embraced this initiative. Not only does Alex feel the incorporation of Aboriginal content is extremely important, but Alex feels that Aboriginal perspective's at least as important as the content. "I feel the important thing is not only that we are teaching about such things as perhaps the Totem Pole. This is what I think of as incorporating Aboriginal content into curriculum. The really important issue is the incorporation of Aboriginal perspective within the curriculum. What does the Totem Pole mean for the people? What is the history behind it? What would the cultures who make Totem Poles tell us about the cultural significance of the Totem Poles?"

The second theme to emerge from the data analysis is that teachers acknowledge the importance of the IAC&P. All of the participants in the interviews felt, to different degrees, that the IAC&P is an important initiative.

Although Jamie has some understanding of the importance of the IAC&P, this understanding is equivalent to the stage of infancy on the circle of life. That is to say that Jamie's level of involvement with the IAC&P is at the primary level of development on the circle of professional growth in terms of Aboriginal content and perspectives. Jamie feels that the IAC&P is very important to Aboriginal children in Band Controlled schools. "I think it was really important for those students [in a Band Controlled School] to have the cultural experiences

that they did. I mean the school population was 100% Native so it made a lot of sense to have Aboriginal content in the school.” Not only should the IAC&P involve only Aboriginal children, but, Jamie feels that it is the Aboriginal community members who should be responsible for this incorporation “The community was involved in the school. Although we followed Saskatchewan Curriculum, the children’s education included a variety of cultural events and teachings. Throughout the school year Elders and other community members were involved with the students. The incorporation of Aboriginal content was pretty much taken care of by those individuals.” Jamie believes that in provincial schools with a wide range of cultures among the student body, it is not appropriate to focus heavily on the IAC&P “Instead we must focus equally on all cultures within our classrooms.”

Kelly, Pat and Alex feel strongly that the IAC&P is an important initiative. They all feel that this incorporation is important to all students. Kelly feels that “this is an important initiative and needs to be implemented much more effectively than it has.” Kelly feels that there is a lack of resources and support to properly assist teachers with this incorporation. Pat says “As an educator I feel that it is very important that we do all we can to incorporate Aboriginal content within the existing curriculum.” And Alex states “As (with) all teachers I bring my life experiences into my teaching. The IAC&P is very natural to me because of my life experiences. I would say that I incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives into all areas that I teach on a regular and ongoing basis.”

The third theme is that further supports are needed for the implementation of the IAC&P. Without further supports teachers are faced with barriers that

make the task of incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives difficult if not impossible at times. The supports that appear to be lacking would be in the form of professional development opportunities that address the IAC&P. Support from administration seems to be available to the participants. Unfortunately, alone this positive support is not sufficient in assisting reluctant teachers with the IAC&P. The teachers have identified the need for professional development support as a critical component required for success. Three of the four participants in the interviews identified specific barriers that have affected the degree to which they incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives. Alex would seem to be the lone participant who did not feel barriers exist. Alex's life experiences have made the IAC&P very natural. Also Alex is aware of resources and resource people to assist in this incorporation.

However, for Jamie three very definite barriers or restrictions exist. First Jamie has found it difficult to locate resources and materials. Second, when Jamie did locate resources it was Jamie's opinion that they were of poor quality and expensive. Thirdly, Jamie feels that the curriculum guides do not support the teachers enough to be able to successfully attempt the IAC&P.

Kelly feels that one barrier is that for teachers "There does not seem to be the same support [when incorporating other initiatives and curriculum] when it comes to the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives into the curriculum." Kelly also feels that the lack of availability of resources is a barrier. Kelly feels that if resources were available they would be a part of the subject areas that Kelly is involved with.

Although Pat has experienced a lot of success with the IAC&P there still exists barriers to Pat's ability to fully incorporate this initiative. Pat says "The lack of support to teachers in regard to the incorporation of Aboriginal content concerns me." Pat also identifies the lack of knowledge about Aboriginal people and their cultures and traditions as a barrier. Pat feels that many teachers do not have the life experiences that would make the IAC&P natural. "I think that's something that we as educators should do, is to become familiar with the current traditions and the current cultural events that are still so important to the Aboriginal community. I think we are really kind of out of touch with that."

When analyzing the surveys and the interviews I found that the data from the interviews supported the data from the surveys. First, the implementation of the IAC&P takes time. The degree to which teachers incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives does not match the desire to be able to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives. Many teachers would like to be able to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives more than they do. Second, generally, teachers felt that the IAC&P is important. And third, further supports are needed in order to eliminate any barriers that might inhibit teachers' ability to be successful with the IAC&P.

Concluding Thoughts Related to the Interviews

As I was transcribing the interviews it became apparent to me that the narratives formed a sacred circle describing the journey of developing the ability to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives. For many Aboriginal people the sacred circle is one of the key aspects to their culture, customs and traditions. Typically the circle contains four sections. The circle is used to describe many

things related to the lives of Aboriginal people. The circle is used to describe or explain such things as the four directions, the four seasons, and the four stages of life to mention a few. One important aspect of the Sacred Circle is that it is continuous. For example when the Sacred Circle is used to explain the seasons the circle moves through spring, summer, fall and winter. But the circle does not stop; winter again leads to spring and the cycle continues. In some cases the circle also moves in an upward spiral motion. When describing the four stages of life we see that an individual is intended to experience infancy, childhood, adulthood and old age. Ultimately, our destiny is to die. Many cultures believe death is followed by a new existence, one that is more pure. Again the circle of life continues but in a new form. This is very similar to the circle that I have recognized as existing together with the interviews. The four sections of the circle describe the following stages of involvement. These stages are awareness, awareness and desire, desire and partial implementation, and full implementation. Each of the four participants who agreed to take part in the interview represented one section of a circle. The following is a description of where I see each of the participants fitting within this Sacred Circle.

First, Jamie is at the beginning of this journey, the awareness stage. The awareness of the importance of the IAC&P is partially recognized by Jamie. Jamie feels that Aboriginal content and perspectives are important for Aboriginal children but not as much for non-Aboriginal students. As of yet there is not a lot of desire, although there is some awareness. Second, Kelly has the desire and is aware of the importance of this initiative. However, Kelly's lack of knowledge in this area has been a source of frustration. Kelly is in the initial stage of awareness

and desire. If Kelly does not receive assistance in terms of locating resources it may be difficult for Kelly to move forward toward the desire and partial implementation stage. Third, Pat is able to do a substantial amount of work in the area of incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives. Although Pat is able to be more successful than Kelly, Pat still feels frustration due to a lack of knowledge. Pat's progress in this stage would be advancing toward full implementation. And finally, Alex is very successful with the IAC&P. Alex seems to have completed the circle in terms of being successful with the IAC&P. Now Alex seems to have advanced to a higher level of understanding and knowledge. Although Alex has been successful at experiencing the full circle Alex has moved again into the areas of awareness and desire but with deeper insight and sophistication.

As educators, we are all somewhere within this circle. The important thing is not necessarily where we are on the circle, but that we are continuing to move in a forward motion around the circle. We need to always be moving toward continuing our own circle. In this way we move ourselves toward knowledge and understanding, two key components that all educators must possess. It also moves us as individuals toward wisdom.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reflections and Recommendations

My study explored the question, what are the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding the implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives? In Chapter 1, I provided a context for the study and described how I came to be interested in teachers' experiences of implementing the initiative to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives. In Chapter 2, I provided a review of the literature related to Aboriginal content and perspectives and the implementation of educational initiatives. In Chapter 3, I discussed how I would obtain the data for this study. Chapter 4 focused on my analysis of the data collected through a survey and an interview. In this chapter I reflect on my journey of completing this study and offer recommendations to policy makers about the IAC&P.

Reflecting On My Study

As I stop and reflect on my study I am amazed by the journey I have experienced to this point. When I first began this process I was angry and disappointed by the negative comments I had heard a number of teachers make regarding the IAC&P. I was also angry and disappointed by the lack of Aboriginal content and perspectives in many classrooms. I was under the impression that the reason many teachers were not incorporating Aboriginal

content and perspectives into their programs was because they did not feel that it was important or necessary.

As my study progressed I realized that I did have some basic information, but I was not accurate about some of the assumptions I held before embarking on this journey. I did indeed find that teachers are not incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives as much as they should be. But I found that they were not incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives because of a number of crucial barriers that were making the task difficult if not impossible in many cases.

When I began my study I felt I would experience certain feelings or emotions. I was certain that the data would confirm my anger and disappointment. I did indeed experience feelings and emotions, but the feelings and emotions I experienced were unexpected. Instead of fueling my anger and disappointment, I found that the feelings and emotions I experienced were positive.

One emotion or feeling that I was certain I would experience was disappointment. I thought that I would be disappointed by the lack of effort teachers were putting forth in terms of the IAC&P. I did indeed feel disappointment, but not for the reason I had assumed. Rather I found that most teachers were willing to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives but were frustrated for a variety of reasons. These reasons included such things as a lack of knowledge concerning how to locate resource materials and resource people. There was frustration because some teachers felt they were not sufficiently prepared for the IAC&P and were not receiving appropriate

professional development to address this frustration. As a result I have found that my disappointment is not with the teachers but with the lack of preparation and inadequate information that has been provided to the teachers.

I was delighted and surprised to experience optimism with my study. Where I had initially feared that teachers were electing not to participate in the IAC&P because they felt it was not important, as my study unfolded, I found that many of the teachers would like to be doing more in the area of IAC&P. Again various obstacles were making this task very difficult if not impossible.

The journey of these teachers in incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives into their curricula is similar to the education journey Aboriginal people have been on, one of difficulty and struggle. Traditionally, Aboriginal education was based on such things as experiential learning, hand-on experiences. There existed no physical institution devoted strictly toward education. Rather the world was the classroom.

Upon the arrival of the Europeans formal education was forced upon the Aboriginal peoples. As I reflect on the journey that Aboriginal people have experienced I can see that this journey, as with most, follows the Sacred Circle. For thousands of years Aboriginal people had developed an education system that was well suited for their needs. Once thrust into the European style of education much of what was familiar to the Aboriginal people in terms of education was either gone or forced into secrecy. From the point of European contact, Aboriginal education began a new circle. They were forced into a foreign education system. Initially formal European education for Aboriginal people meant concealing one's Aboriginal identity. Failure to conform to this

expectation often meant harsh punishment for the Aboriginal children. As a result many Aboriginal children were made to feel bad and ashamed about their Aboriginal heritage. This was the reality in Aboriginal education for many years as Aboriginal people were forced to attend European schools. But within the past thirty years Aboriginal people have regained more ownership of their education. Although the journey is long, it is non-the less moving in a forward motion. The circle continues to evolve. Today we have a situation in which Aboriginal people are influencing the European education system in a positive way that is beneficial to all participants in the education system. One of the forms of influence is acknowledging, respecting and honoring all cultures. Another is a more experiential, hands-on approach to education. With continued input and influence, the circle of Aboriginal education will continue to move toward one that celebrates Aboriginal people fully within a foreign system.

As a foreign system European education was a major force in the process of colonization that attempted to strip Aboriginal people of their culture, traditions, customs, language and lifestyle. Some of these effects have been devastating to Aboriginal people. It is believed by many Aboriginal people that the seventh generation of Aboriginal people will regain that which has been lost. The adults of today are the fifth generation, the generation that has begun the movement toward healing the wounds and scars of the past five hundred years. As a member of the fifth generation, I feel a great responsibility to do all I can to assist in the healing process and ease the greater task that the children of the sixth and seventh generations will be faced with. I feel that in the area of education there exists the opportunity to assist in the healing of Aboriginal people and lay a

path for the sixth and seventh generations so they can achieve the prophecy and have guidance on their journey.

Education has the potential to be used as either a tool or a weapon. The formal education system that has existed in this country for the past five hundred years has operated as both tool and weapon simultaneously. It was used as a tool with non-Aboriginal people in a way that prepared them for their future by providing the necessary education. At the same time it was being used as a weapon against Aboriginal people. As stated earlier, education's major focus was to strip Aboriginal people of their culture, traditions, customs, language and lifestyles, and replace these aspects with European culture, traditions, customs, language and lifestyles. Education must no longer be used as a weapon, but as a tool for everyone. As a tool, education has the ability to assist in empowering Aboriginal people and perhaps undoing some of the negative effects that Aboriginal people have endured for the past five hundred years.

When I initially began my thesis journey I was very skeptical. I had become hardened by the negative attitudes and minimal efforts of a number of educators I had encountered. I knew more emphasis needed to be placed on the IAC&P but I felt frustrated because I felt many educators regarded the IAC&P as a nuisance rather than a required initiative.

Recommendations

As my study unfolded five recommendations were revealed. The recommendations were brought forth by the data obtained through the survey and the semi-structured interviews. First, there needs to exist a partnership between the education system and Aboriginal agencies and groups. These agencies and

groups could include Chief and Councils of neighboring reserves, Cultural Centers, Tribal Councils and the FSIN. Now that the education system has formally recognized the need for including Aboriginal content and perspectives it must not be done from a European perspective. The perspective that needs to be heavily emphasized is the Aboriginal perspective.

The perspective is important, but so is the content to be taught. If there existed strong partnerships between the education system and the Aboriginal communities there would be less confusion as to what is to be taught. We could eliminate such things as the “Pan-Indian” approach. This approach does not recognize the differences between various Aboriginal Nations and cultural families. For example the Saulteaux Nation extends from Ontario to Saskatchewan and south as far as Minnesota. The Saulteaux Nation occupies a vast territory. While there are many similarities among all people of the Saulteaux Nation, there also exist many cultural groups or families. These cultural families or groups are unique in specific ways. It is important to recognize the differences from one cultural group or family to another.

The first recommendation to emerge from this study, that a partnership is needed between the education system and the Aboriginal communities is important to ensure that the content and the perspective are both culturally appropriate to Aboriginal people. For example there are certain sacred ceremonies that should not be put on public display. It is necessary for the education system to know about these aspects in order that these are respected. If we are not aware of these restrictions we risk further alienating the Aboriginal students within the current education system if we bring these aspects into our

programs. We also need to be culturally appropriate in terms of content and perspectives with the European aspects of the education system. It may not be culturally appropriate for some Aboriginal students to dissect particular species in biology. As a teacher one must be aware of these possibilities and offer alternative activities to these students in order that they receive the information needed but in a way that does not disrespect their culture.

The second recommendation to emerge from the study is that teachers require more knowledge about specific protocols where Elders in particular are concerned. The protocols observed by Aboriginal people toward others, and in particular the Elders, are held in high regard in Aboriginal communities. To ignore, or fail to recognize these protocols is seen as disrespectful. For example there may be a certain way to approach Elders for assistance or guidance in the classroom. Out of respect such protocols must be observed. If the protocols are not followed, it may result in offending individuals and affecting their response and ability to assist to their fullest extent. This is another area in which a partnership between the education system and Aboriginal groups and agencies would be very beneficial.

The third recommendation to emerge is the need for increased awareness of how and where to locate resource materials and resource people. From the study this seems to be a major obstacle for many of the teachers involved. Many teachers indicated they would incorporate more Aboriginal content and perspectives into their existing programs if they had access to a variety of resources. At this point many do not know how or where to locate such materials. Many teachers feel that without the necessary resources the IAC&P is

an overwhelming task and they cannot be expected to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives without these resources available to them.

The fourth recommendation to emerge is that more professional development must be offered to teachers to assist them with the IAC&P. Many of the teachers indicated that they had not received any professional development on the IAC&P to this point in their careers. Professional development is recognized as being a crucial element in keeping the teaching profession current and striving toward excellence. Currently educators are exposed to a wide variety of professional development opportunities. It would seem logical to provide teachers with the necessary professional development to equip them to feel adequate and confident with the IAC&P in light of the fact that the IAC&P is a required element in all curricula.

The last recommendation to emerge is that colleges of education must become more involved in preparing teachers for the IAC&P. Saskatchewan Learning has placed emphasis on the importance of the IAC&P. It would seem logical that teacher preparation programs prepare future teachers to be able to fulfill this component of their teaching requirements. If pre-service teachers were formally prepared for the IAC&P some of the obstacles they are currently facing might become obsolete. Without this formal preparation the colleges of education are doing a disservice to all teachers and in turn to the students the teachers are to educate. It will be difficult to improve upon the current situation in which teachers' experiences with the IAC&P are limited, without the direct involvement of colleges of education.

As I examine the recommendations that emerged from the study, I could not help but wonder what the situation will be like for the seventh generation. I recognize that the past thirty years have brought about changes in education for Aboriginal people. However, a conscious attempt must be made to ensure that the education system today and in the future is one that is fair and equitable to all participants. For this to be possible, all educators must be fully prepared to deliver programs that are rich with Aboriginal content and perspectives. I am concerned about the journey that lies ahead for future generations. I know enough is not being done at this point to ensure that the education system is one that fully embraces Aboriginal people and the IAC&P. We must continue to do all we can to ensure necessary changes are brought about. Although I have concerns, I know the time is upon us when Aboriginal people's pride and strength will defeat and triumph over a foreign education system that has in the past oppressed so many.

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APPENDIX A

Indian and Metis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12

Sections quoted from the document entitled "Indian and Metis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12" written in October of 1995 are indicated below. This document was developed by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment.

"INDIAN AND METIS EDUCATION PRINCIPLES WITH-IN SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT K TO 12 PROGRAM"

"Four principles guide the development of education programs for and about Indian and Metis peoples by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment. These are:

- Indian and Metis people have the opportunity to participate fully in the planning, design and delivery and, where applicable, co-management of the education system at all levels.
- The education system recognizes Indian and Metis students are the children of peoples whose cultures are, in many ways, different from those who established the school system. These differences which may include learning styles, language and world-view, must be reflected in curriculum, programs, teaching methods and climate in the schools attended by Indian and Metis children.
- There is a coordination of efforts to meet the needs of Indian and Metis students in the communities in which they live. There is ongoing consultation and cooperation between and among federal and provincial governments and their agencies, local education and community development authorities.
- Programs to improve the success of Indian and Metis students in school are focused primarily at the school community level" (p.1).

"CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES..."

The three major curriculum objectives are:

- The inclusion of Indian and Metis content in all core curricula for all students in the province,
- The development and implementation of programs for and about Indian and Metis students, for example: Native Studies and Indian Language programs.
- The development, identification and coordination distribution of instructional resources and locally produced materials for core and other curricula" (p. 4).

"PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR INDIAN AND METIS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Improvements to the education of Indian and Metis students are dependent upon changes in the processes of development (evaluation, design, implementation and maintenance), the instructional approaches taken, and the presentation and representation of curricula and materials. The following principles and guidelines outline the direction that these changes should take to benefit all Saskatchewan students:

INVOLVEMENT OF INDIAN AND METIS PEOPLES

Indian and Metis people will be involved in educational planning and curriculum development.

-Indian and Metis people will be recognized as partners in the curriculum development process through representation on curriculum committees, task forces, reference committees, project teams and other committees of the department.

-As partners, Indian and Metis peoples will participate in the decision making process as well as in an advisory capacity.

-The knowledge within Indian and Metis communities and institutions will be utilized in the development of Indian and Metis content.

SUITABILITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

The dignity of students, both individually and collectively will be respected by utilizing instructional approaches that are sensitive to Indian and Metis cultural values.

-Indian and Metis perspectives will be a factor in determining instructional approaches.

-A variety of instructional approaches will be used to accommodate a variety of learning styles.

-Teacher education will be structured to include skills and knowledge necessary to teach Indian and Metis students” (p. 9)

ADEQUACY OF CURRICULUM

Indian, Metis and Inuit peoples will be represented in the Core Curriculum elective course at all grade levels. They will be represented fairly and accurately in all curricula and materials approved and developed by Saskatchewan Education Training and Employment. Courses and programs will be developed to meet the specific needs and interests of Indian and Metis students.

-Curricula and materials will concentrate on positive images of Indian, Metis and Inuit peoples.

-Curricula and materials will reinforce and complement the beliefs and values of Indian, Metis and Inuit peoples.

-Curricula and materials will include historical and contemporary issues.

-A strong curriculum emphasis will be given to Indian/Metis Studies, Indian Languages, and English language development.

-Curricula and materials will reflect the legal, cultural, historical, political social, economic and regional diversity of Indian, Metis and Inuit peoples” (p.10)

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions

1. Please identify the levels at which you have teaching experience. Circle all appropriate responses.

K - 5 6 - 9 10 -12

2. Please list the subject areas past and present that you have been responsible for teaching.

3. Please list by institution, course number and name any formal classes you have taken in the area of Native Studies and/or Aboriginal Education. If you cannot recall the course name and number, please give a short description of the course(s) and the name of the institution. For example Native Studies I 10. 6 Introduction to Native Studies, EDIND 220.6 Advanced Oral and Written Cree for Teachers.

4. I feel the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is the same as the incorporation of other curriculum.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

5. I have had the opportunity to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

6. I am aware of resource materials that are specific to Aboriginal content and perspectives.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

7. I am aware of resource people who could assist me with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

8. I feel I have been successful with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the curriculum.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

9. I have had support from administration in implementing Aboriginal content and perspectives.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

10. I feel I have received sufficient professional development sessions on implementing Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

11. I feel that the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives is a part of the core subject curriculum.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

12. I feel that there are specific subject areas that are more suited to the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
13. I feel that I have done all that I can to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
14. I feel I should have the choice to decide if I want to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
15. I am frustrated because I feel I have been forced to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
16. I do not see where the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives would apply to my program.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
17. My subject area has always been taught a specific way. I do not feel it is necessary to change to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
18. I feel we should spend more time on developing the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
19. I have found it difficult to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
20. I would welcome assistance with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within my program.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
21. My experience in implementing new curricula from Saskatchewan Education has been positive and successful.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
22. My administrator has made efforts to assist me in implementing new curricula.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

23. My colleagues and I assist each other with the implementation of new curricula.

____ Strongly agree ____ Agree ____ Undecided ____ Disagree ____ Strongly disagree

I realize I have only touched upon a few of the issues involved with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the curriculum. At this time I would like to invite you to comment on the issues covered by the survey, or other issues you may have.

If you would be interested in participating in an interview, please indicate so by filling in your name and phone number so I can contact you.

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Please return this survey by (Date) to;

Dawne Thomas

Box 462

Rosthern, Sask.

SOK 3RO

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX C

Letter of Intent – Directors

Letter of Intent – Director

June 13, 2000

Dear _____ ;

I am presently a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan working toward a Master of Education degree in Curriculum Studies. I would like to request your permission to conduct a research study within your school division. I would like the study to involve one elementary school and one high school within your division. The proposed participants in this study are the teachers, in the schools of your choosing, who wish to volunteer in this research study. Initially, their involvement would be to complete a survey. Attached to the survey is a section asking the participants if they would be willing to take part in a personal interview. It is my hope that 1 to 3 teachers from your division would be willing to become involved in the interview stage of this research study.

My research question is “What are the experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding implementation of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within current provincial curriculum”. The purpose of this study is to identify challenges or barriers facing teachers which may make this implementation difficult, and in some cases impossible. It is my hope that, through the surveys, I will be able to identify teachers who are experiencing such difficulties and who are willing to volunteer to take part in a semi-structured interview. I feel that if we are able to examine the challenges and difficulties that teachers are facing we may be able to develop meaningful suggestions that may ease the task.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and site will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. The findings of this study may be published in scholarly journals or used in conference presentations, but at all times, the names of the participants and school will remain anonymous. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Each participant will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Their withdrawal will not result in any type of penalty.

I will be interviewing selected teachers to better understand their experiences in implementing Aboriginal content and perspectives within the current curriculum. It is desired that each of the interviews be tape recorded to ensure that the information provided by the participant is understood correctly. Each participant will have the opportunity to sign a consent form indicating that they agree to have the interview tape recorded. Prior to the interview, if the participant does not agree to the use of a tape recorder, then the data from the interview will be collected in the form of written notes. Should the participant agree to tape recording the interview, they will be provided with a copy of the transcript. Upon examination of their conversation, they have the right to expand upon, clarify, or delete any of their comments. The transcripts and tapes will be safeguarded and securely stored for a minimum of five years at the University of Saskatchewan as per University regulations. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study, all data pertaining to that participant will be destroyed.

I believe this study will help teachers gain insight into the challenges facing them regarding the implementation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the current curriculum. I also believe that we may develop suggestions that may ease some of these challenges. Further information pertaining to the research study may be obtained from my supervisor, Dr. Angela Ward (966-7585), Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Saskatchewan, or myself Dawne Thomas (232-5381). Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Dawne Thomas

APPENDIX D
Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your teaching career.
 - Why did you choose to be a teacher?
 - Where did you receive your training?
 - Could you describe the details of your teaching assignments?
2. Describe your experiences in incorporating curricula from Saskatchewan Education that you may have been responsible for.
 - Have you received support and/or resources from your administrator or colleagues?
 - Do you feel that through your academic training and professional development, you were properly prepared for incorporating new curricula?
3. What academic preparation have you had in incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives?
4. What professional development have you been involved in that focused on preparing you for incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives within your program?
5. Describe how you have incorporated Aboriginal content and perspectives into your program?
 - Do you feel comfortable and confident incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives?
 - Do you perceive Aboriginal content and perspectives as a part of the core curriculum or a supplemental to your program?
 - Have you received support and/or resources from your administrator or colleagues?
 - What has been successful for you in terms of incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives?
 - Do we as teachers have a choice as to whether we incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives?
 - Are there specific subject areas that are more suited to the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives?
 - Do you feel it is the responsibility of Aboriginal teachers to incorporate of Aboriginal content within the curriculum?
6. What life experiences have you had that have prepared you for incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives into your program?
7. Have you experienced any difficulties, barriers, challenges, or issues with the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the existing curriculum.
8. What suggestions would you have that might ease the task of incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives into the existing curriculum?

APPENDIX E

Ethics Approval/Letters of Consent

Application for Approval of Research Protocol Submitted to the Advisory Committee of Ethics in Behavioral Science Research.

RESEARCHER: Dr. Angela Ward, College of Education (Thesis Supervisor)

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Dawne Thomas, Graduate Student (M.Ed.), Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education.

TITLE: Experiences of selected Saskatchewan teachers regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the current curriculum.

ABSTRACT: This study will relate to the experiences of teachers in incorporating Aboriginal content within the current curriculum. The purpose of this study is to identify challenges or barriers facing teachers which may make this incorporation difficult, and in some cases impossible. Numerous documents, and much research has been concluded which emphasizes the need and the importance of the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the curriculum. The benefits of this incorporation are not only for all students from Kindergarten to grade 12, but also students at the post secondary level.

FUNDING: No funding has been sought for the purpose of this study.

PARTICIPANTS: The teachers from one high school and one elementary school in each of the following teaching settings will be sought: Urban school division, Rural school division and a Band controlled school.

CONSENT: Prior to the first interview, all participants will complete a consent form.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES: Qualitative methods will be used to examine the experiences of Saskatchewan teachers in incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives within the current curriculum. Methodologies include survey, personal interviews and focus groups.

STORAGE OF DATA: The audio tapes, transcripts and written notes will be kept in Dr. Angela Ward's office for a period of five years following the completion of the study, after which time they will be destroyed.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS: Data collection will be used to formulate the basis of a Master's Thesis. This thesis will be made available to the schools and the school boards involved in the study, and to the Curriculum Department.

RISK OR DECEPTION: There are no foreseeable risks to the participants and there is no element of deception. The participants will be made aware that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality will be ensured to the extent that is possible through the use of pseudonyms when referring to the participants involved.

DATA/TRANSCRIPT RELEASE: Any direct words, comments, and/or quotations from the transcripts may be published in the final report. Participants will be given the opportunity to review the final transcripts. At this time they have the opportunity to make corrections or deletions. Once satisfied the participants will sign a release form that acknowledges the transcripts accurately reflect what they have said or intended to say.

DEBRIEFING AND FEEDBACK: The participants will have the opportunity for debriefing and feedback when we gather for the focus group.

SIGNATURES:

Dawne Thomas
Student Researcher

Dr. Angela Ward
College of Education

CONSENT FORM

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the experiences of Saskatchewan teachers regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives within the current curriculum. It has been made evident to me that many teachers are faced with challenges or barriers that make this incorporation not only difficult, but in some cases impossible. It is my hope that, through the surveys, I will be able to identify approximately 12 teachers who are experiencing such difficulties and who are willing to volunteer to take part in a semi-structured interview and a focus group. I feel that if we are able to examine the challenges and difficulties that teachers are facing we may be able to develop meaningful suggestions that may ease this task.

Each interview should take 30 - 45 minutes to complete and will take place at a suitable location and time for the participant.

It is desired that each interview be tape-recorded. This will only be done with your written permission indicated below.

Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time and if so, a data pertaining to your involvement will be destroyed.

Confidentiality will be ensured to the extent that is possible through the use of pseudonyms when referring to your participation, and the removal of all identifying descriptions.

The audio tapes, transcripts and written notes will be kept safe in Dr. Angela Ward's office for a period of five years following the completion of the study, after which time they will be destroyed.

There are no foreseeable risks to you as a participant and there is no element of deception.

If you consent to participate, a suitable arrangement for an interview will be made. In addition, please fill out the form below. Keep one copy for yourself and return one copy to Dawne Thomas at the time of the interview. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact myself Dawne Thomas (232-5381) or my thesis advisor Dr. Angela Ward (966-7585). Thank you for the time and consideration you have given this matter.

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT

I, _____, have read and understand the above guidelines for participation consent. With these conditions, I hereby agree to participate in this study that will examine the experiences of Saskatchewan teachers in incorporating Aboriginal content and perspectives in the curriculum.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I agree to the tape recording of the interview. I understand that the tape is to be used to ensure the information provided by the participant, is understood correctly by Dawne Thomas. I also understand that Dawne Thomas is the only one who will listen to the tapes.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview and have had the opportunity to make any corrections or deletions that I deem necessary. I acknowledge that the transcripts accurately reflect what I said in my personal interview with Dawne Thomas. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Dawne Thomas to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of the Transcript Release Form for my personal records.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____